



Connecticut

Testimony of AARP Volunteer, Aura Alvarado
Opposing Governor's Enrollment Cap to the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders
Appropriations Committee
Feb. 16, 2016

Good evening, my name is Aura Alvarado. I am an AARP volunteer from Hartford. On behalf of AARP's approximately 600,000 members in Connecticut, I want to ask you to reject the Governor's proposed cuts to vital home care services and respite available through the CT Home Care Program for Elders.

I along with my two older sisters and our father are caregivers for our mother who is suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia. Nothing could have prepared us for the daily struggles we all face trying to keep our mother in her familiar surroundings but wouldn't have it any other way. So for you to propose closed access to home care is unacceptable. My parents worked their entire life, have insurance, contributed to their retirement and now in the years where they should be enjoying their golden years they are far from it. Day by day we focus on keeping our mother comfortable, safe and loved. For you Governor and CT General Assembly members to even consider closing access to adult day care and other crucial services that assist the care givers for our seniors is beyond comprehension. I hope none of you are in the current situation I, my sisters, my dad and so many others are faced with regarding daily care for their elderly parents. Coordinating schedules, meals, doctor appointments, time off for our dad so he gets a break is something I hope you all never have to deal with. We don't complain because we can and do it out of love. What we do complain is to your proposal of limited and closes access!

Hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents, just like me, care for older parents and spouses to help them stay safely at home – and out of costly nursing homes, saving taxpayers millions. Family caregivers have big responsibilities, and could use some relief – a little bit of help at home, so they can continue to provide the care our loved ones count on.

The Governor's proposal would close off access to adult day care, meals on wheels, home health care and other community based services under the Connecticut Home Care for Elders adding tremendous pressure on family to try to keep their loved ones safe at home. And, unfortunately, it will force more seniors into nursing homes, costing taxpayers more money. This is something my family is definitely against. We want our mother surrounded by constant love in the surroundings that make her comfortable. Have you ever seen an Alzheimer's patient freak out because she doesn't want to leave the house? I have and it is the saddest thing.

A report by [Health Management Associates](#) shows that delivering home care is three times more cost-effective than taxpayer funded, institutional care, and that 88 percent of seniors prefer to age in their own community as long as they are able.

Sadly, this budget departs from Connecticut's commitment to cost-effective home and community supports. It erodes programs, from prescription drugs to nutrition programs and more, which make it possible for seniors to afford to stay at home.

The budget also adds financially strained family caregivers who are spending an average of nearly 20 percent of their income providing care for a family member or other loved one.¹ AARP research shows that family caregivers spend an average of \$6,954 in out-of-pocket costs related to caregiving, with Hispanic/Latino and low-income family caregivers spending an average of 44 percent of their total annual income.

Please stand up for seniors and the family caregivers who support them. Reject the proposal to cap intake for the Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders. Thank you!

¹ AARP Research Report, [Family Caregiving and Out-of-Pocket Costs: 2016 Report](#).